

(Washington, DC) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) made the following statement following the passage of amendment #128 to H.R. 1540, the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012*

. The amendment introduced by Hastings requires Members of Congress to be given in-depth briefings on the cultures, religions, ethnicities, geographies, histories, and politics of nations in which the Armed Forces are engaged or are proposed to engage in military action.

(Please find attached a copy of the amendment).

"I have offered to the *National Defense Authorization Act* an amendment to ensure that Members of Congress are fully briefed on the complexities of the nations and regions in which our Armed Forces are engaged.

"With our Armed Forces engaged in multiple conflicts around the world, I am concerned that Members of Congress do not have enough opportunities to obtain the necessary knowledge when judging whether to commit U.S. lives and resources to these enormously complex regions.


"Very few of these conflicts ever present just 'good guys' and 'bad guys' but rather tangled webs of different loyalties, ethnicities, interests, goals, histories, and cultures. The problem is that few Members really grasp the immense complexities of geography, history, culture, religion, and demography in these countries.

"Whether Afghanistan or Pakistan, Libya or Iraq, Members are asked to support hundreds of billions of dollars every year to wage war against forces and in places we do not fully understand. Today we have scores of new Members who, for the most part, do not have a background in foreign affairs, and do not have a deep understanding of the current conflicts where our Armed Forces are engaged.

"Before voting with respect to funding the deployment of our Armed Forces, there ought to be a time period for Members to learn about and consider the complexities and uncertainties of engaging our military in conflicts around the world. My amendment seeks to create more opportunities for Members to become educated about these conflicts before voting to fund military operations there and I am pleased to see it included in the *National Defense Authorization Act* ."

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings serves as Senior Member of the House Rules Committee, Ranking Democratic Member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and Democratic Chairman of the Florida Delegation.

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 [Amendment 128 to H.R. 1540.pdf](#)